

NEWSLETTER



ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS

prepared by the public services division

February 10, 1974

EDUCATION DIVISION

The new face you may have seen in the Plant Science Library belongs to Joy Sielen, our new student professional worker. She is enrolled in the master's program in psychology at California State University, Los Angeles, and plans to continue in the doctoral program next year. Every morning Joy goes jogging and during her spare time enjoys handicrafts, tennis, and playing the piano.

Karen Asher will be giving a lecture demonstration in indoor gardening during the spring semester to the 16 participating elementary schools of the Pasadena School District.

DESCANSO DIVISION

More than 600 people came to see the rose-pruning demonstration at Descanso last January 12.

The first of the Sunday Morning walks at Descanso will begin February 10. George Lewis will conduct the tour through the camellia forest starting at 10 a.m.

Fernando Ramirez and Joe Macias are busily installing camellia tables for the upcoming annual Camellia Show February 23 and 24. Adding to the color are the beds of primroses, calendulas, and iceland poppies.

Birds observed lately are a large group of thrush, cedar waxwings, Cooper's hawks, and red-necked woodpeckers. We are sorry to report that the Great Blue Heron that spent so many winters in the garden was recently found dead in the lake area.

RESEARCH DIVISION

During the past two smog seasons George Hanson and Linda Thorne have been selecting petunia plants for smog tolerance. From a population of several hundred plants, 20 to 30 of the most tolerant individuals are chosen. Pollen is obtained from these plants and used to pollinate other smog tolerant petunias. Seeds are obtained and planted and the cycle repeated. A commercial petunia seed company is interested in our program and plans to send us their most tolerant varieties for comparison this summer. Should our selections outperform theirs, they will be released to the public.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Here are some general information items you may have need of:

Social Security for 1974 will be deducted on earnings up to a maximum of \$13,200.

Watch for an open enrollment announcement on life insurance in the next issue of Digest.

Should the need arise, requests for duplicate 1973 W-2 Forms may not be made before March 1, 1974.

For those planning vacations of two weeks or more, remember that vacation pay advance requests must be made two to three weeks before you plan to leave.

We are already well into the new year and thanks to the able assistance of Rita Williamson, sick and overtime balances will be available around February 19. Thank you for your patience.

Please come and see the new look of the personnel payroll unit. Charleen will open the door of her new office to everyone on Wednesday, February 13, at 2 o'clock. Refreshments will be served.

PUBLIC SERVICES DIVISION

A pilot program is under way to bring the substance of our school field trips to a limited number of schools. Head tour guide Dave Fields and Las Voluntarias field leaders Mavis Blake, Pat Earl, and Betty Price, will make a presentation this month to four fourth grade classes at the 122nd Street Elementary School in the Willowbrook area of Los Angeles.

The cancellation by the L.A. City School District of its field trip busing service early last December prompted this test program. It will continue even though busing has been restored.

Our first-Sunday-of-the-month birdwalks at the Arboretum have started again with as-needed tour guide Dennis Sheridan, a Cal Poly zoology graduate, serving as leader. Dennis' first walk attracted about 85 people who saw 26 species, among them a pied-billed grebe, a Cooper's hawk, and a yellow-throat.

Tak Niiya's outdoor vegetable garden lecture, Dennis Sheridan's birdwalk, and beautiful sunny weather this past Sunday combined to draw the largest daily attendance in the past five years - 7,327.

We want to welcome two new part-time tour guides at the Arboretum -- Robert Stassinis and Wally Pistone who will be filling in mostly on weekends but also sometimes during the week.

ARBORETUM DIVISION

Mike Thorne is coming from South Coast Botanic Gardens and will be an Arboretum Gardener working with Joe Erby in the North Garden Section.

The new entrance is completely functional now with the steps being the primary access to the gardens. The former gatehouse has been refurbished and is now the home of the Las Voluntarias.

Mechanical Department painters have been active in the Administration Building and it looks like a brand new place inside. They are scheduled to begin work in the historical area and should have completed most of the work there by the time you read this.

SOUTH COAST DIVISION

The Sanitation District has dug three one-inch, 150-foot-deep holes in the northeast area of the garden to study the decomposition rate of the trash fill. The information gained will be used in feasibility studies concerning the use of methane gas produced in decomposition as a possible energy source.

Congratulations to David Acuna on his recent promotion to Assistant Arboretum Gardener.

We regret to report that Dan Zorich, utility tractor operator, suffered a heart attack January 17. He spent a week in intensive care and expects to be hospitalized until about February 14. At last report he was still unable to have visitors. Cards can be sent to him at his home, 2623 Graham Avenue, Redondo Beach 90277. Take it easy and get well, Dan!

Recently, Mr. Roy Ito, new assistant director, was welcomed to South Coast for participation in a full staff meeting. A discussion followed with Mr. Ito, Mr. Simerly, and Mr. Ching responding to staff questions and comments.